

Speech from the Throne

pockets of the wheat producers of this country. However, I emphasize that after many years of frustration it was this government that had the gumption and the foresight to give the wheat farmers of Canada the square deal that they are now getting.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: Many years ago I used to read about the great salesmanship of the Hon. Alvin Hamilton, minister of agriculture in the Conservative government. I admired him because he sold wheat and grain to the markets of the world. But, Mr. Speaker, if hon. members of the opposition are proud of that gentleman's name, how much prouder should they be of the Hon. Otto Lang who, last year, sold more wheat than in any other year in the history of Canada?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: I ask my western friends only one thing. Tell the farmers of western Canada of the great salesmanship job that the Hon. Otto Lang has done. Just as a matter of interest, Mr. Speaker, I received a letter on my desk this morning from the Sales and Marketing Executive Association of Regina which is having an awards dinner to honour the Hon. Otto Lang as salesman of the year.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: Mr. Speaker, it is incomprehensible to me why members of the opposition do not clap. This minister sold western products. They should be proud of him.

I also ask my western friends to tell the farmers that it was chiefly through the efforts of the Hon. Otto Lang, and of the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson), that they got a two price system for wheat. They should also tell farmers that it was the Minister of Agriculture who spear-headed the efforts to get the government to give the hog producers a \$5 subsidy for their hogs.

Just before the New Year, Parliament passed a national marketing bill, known as Bill C-176, which does more to influence my decision that the agricultural industry is on the way up than any other piece of legislation. It was an act that, in principle, was asked for by every major agricultural body in the country. It is an act that, for the first time in history, will allow the farmers to run their own show. At all times there will be a majority of producing farmers on the council that administers the act. It will allow farmers, if they wish, to have agencies set up for any product, and will, for the first time in history, help ensure that the agricultural community will get fair prices for the food commodities that it produces. I repeat that the farmers of Canada wanted this legislation, and after nearly two years it has been given to them by the government, with the proper amendments that the agricultural community sought.

You may remember, Mr. Speaker, that we stayed here until the early hours of the morning to pass that bill through the House. I remember the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) sitting here for hours that night, showing an interest in the farmers of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whicher: But where, Mr. Speaker, were the leaders of the other parties?

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Whicher: I haven't any idea where they were, but one thing I do know is that they were not here looking after the interests of the farmers of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: I have to interrupt the hon. member to inform him that the time allotted to him under the terms of the Standing Order have expired.

Some hon. Members: Carry on.

Mr. Speaker: He can continue only with the consent of the House.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Whicher: Mr. Speaker, when I was at home during the past month I must confess that none of my farming friends asked where the leader of the New Democratic Party was on that particular night. They really don't care. However, I was asked by some of my Conservative friends where the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) was when his help was needed to get this bill through. I replied that I did not know, but that I would certainly ask him at the first opportunity. No doubt at the opportune moment both of these leaders will tell us where they were.

Last year we had a crisis in Canada. The FLQ were raising havoc in the great city of Montreal. Hindsight is a great thing to have and it may very well be that, as a result of looking into the past, we may conclude the government over-reacted, at least to some degree on that particular occasion. But there is one thing that we do know, namely that one very responsible cabinet minister of the Quebec government was murdered and one senior official of the British government was kidnapped. There is one other thing that we know, if we are honest with ourselves, and that is that 98 per cent of the people of Canada stood behind the Prime Minister in the action that he took in that hazardous hour.

• (1440)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: The Leader of the Cr ditistes (Mr. Caouette) to his everlasting credit, backed up the Prime Minister.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: But what about the leaders of the other two parties? Mr. Speaker, they waffled, like the waffle group of the New Democratic Party. They tried to play politics in Canada's hour of danger.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: They were willing to gamble with Canada's freedom because they did not like the fact some people were put in jail for a few days. Mr. Speaker, during the past two world wars thousands of Canadians died to help keep Canada free and we are not prepared to gamble with this freedom for the sake of political expediency. Mr.